

# Michigan Association for Purebred Dogs



# Michigan Hunting Dog Federation



## Position Paper House Bill 5252

This bill is intended to penalize the custodian of an animal that has bitten a person for leaving the scene.

The actions required of the custodian of the animal by HB 5252 is necessary for the injured party to seek successful treatment for the wounds inflicted. They are what a reasonable person would voluntarily do to assist the injured. For these reasons we support the bill.

We would, however, ask you to delete the term "wolf-dog cross" from the language of the bill for the following reasons, possibly making it apply to any animal whether dog, cat, ferret, horse, etc.

A. The term "wolf-dog cross" does not identify a distinct, definable subspecies of the genus *Canis*. In Public Act 246 of 2000 the definition "Wolf-dog cross" means a canid resulting from the breeding of any of the following:

- (i) A wolf with a dog.
- (ii) A wolf-dog cross with a wolf.
- (iii) A wolf-dog cross with a dog.
- (iv) A wolf-dog cross with a wolf-dog cross.

The current academic opinion, based on mitochondrial DNA, is that the wolf is the sole ancestor of domestic dogs. According to (iii & iv) all domestic dogs are wolf-dog crosses. In fact some of the recognized breeds of dogs with the international dog registry (Federation Cynologique Internationale – FCI) can be traced back to the original mating of two wolves.

B. The accurate identification of a dog as a wolf-dog cross, based on appearance, is very difficult if not impossible. There are a number of purebred dogs, and mixed breed dogs, that can easily be misidentified as wolf-dog crosses. The present DNA tests cannot distinguish between individual dogs as to breed or mixture. This definition puts many purebred and mixed breed pet dogs in peril. Animal control officers are required to confiscate a dog that is a wolf-dog cross (state law). This may have to be done at the scene of the accident, particularly under circumstances listed under (C) below.

C. The vaccine used to prevent rabies must be labeled for use in each species. The current rabies vaccine is NOT labeled to be used in wolf-dog crosses. This makes the positive identification of the dog critical (whether dog or wolf-dog cross), even though the owner has a valid rabies certificate. Even if the dog has a valid rabies certificate, the

victim could be required to take the prophylactic treatment if there is a question about the ancestry of the biter (dog or wolf-dog cross) even though the vaccine is widely used in wild carnivores in zoos without any rabies outbreaks, it is still not an acceptable immunization

Since there is a bill introduced, HB 6237 assigned to the Agriculture Committee, to repeal Public Act 246 of 2000 (Wolf-Dog Cross Act) it may be well for the Judiciary Committee to examine this act to assess the possibility of unintended consequences.

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